

REMARKS

Claims 1 to 24 are pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 10, 13, 17, 20 and 21 are the independent claims herein. Favorable consideration and early passage to issue are respectfully requested.

The abstract has been amended so that the number of words therein does not exceed 150.

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.56, Applicant respectfully directs the Examiner's attention to JP 8-132648, which is listed on the attached Form PTO-1449 and of which a copy, together with an English-language abstract, is enclosed. A concise explanation of relevance for this document is believed to be provided by the English-language abstract.

Inasmuch as the subject application has not yet received a first Office Action, it is believed that this Information Disclosure Statement is timely. See 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(b)(3). Accordingly, the Examiner is urged to study this information in its entirety and to form an independent determination of the materiality of the information to the claimed invention. Additionally, the Examiner is requested to indicate that this information has been considered by initialing the appropriate portion of Form PTO-1449.

CONCLUSION

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, CA office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,


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